THE

COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL

AND

EDUCATIONAL REFORMER.

NEW SERIES.

WM. B. FOWLE, EDITOR.

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REVIEW OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IT BEING THE THIRD OF THE PRESENT SECRETARY.—1851.

[Continued from No. 6, page 87.]

The next error in education is expressed in these words,—"It is a very common error to regard education as consisting chiefly in the acquisition of knowledge. Persons who entertain this view generally estimate knowledge by its *extent* rather than by its *depth*." Extent and depth applied to knowledge often mean the same thing, and neither has a bad sense, extensive knowledge being by no means synonymous with shallow or superficial knowledge, which the Secretary probably had in view. "If we look into the schools where education is conducted on such a principle, and it would not be difficult to find them, we shall see the pupils laboring to store the memory with an immense mass of words and sentences, which are to them often little better than the words of a dead language, or of (with?) facts without understanding their nature, relations or uses." We are bound to like all the Secretary says in this strain, for we have preached this doctrine more than thirty years, and for more than twenty gave a practical exhibition of our abhorrence of this abuse of the verbal memory; but we do not believe, with the Secretary, that "The weakest point in the whole

system of American education is its deficiency in thoroughness in all the elementary studies," because we believe the general neglect of manners and morals infinitely more important than the elements of arithmetic or of any other science. Still, the neglect of thorough instruction in the elements is a prevalent and a serious defect, and it will prevail until the *teachers* are made more thorough in the elements. Their deficiency in this respect is deplorable, as we have had too many opportunities to witness, and hence our opposition to that plan of the Secretary, which proposes to keep the pupils of one of the Normal Schools an extra year or two in order to give them a smattering of Latin and French, when they are so deficient in the elementary studies which are taught in the District Schools. "In our Academies," says the Secretary, "pupils enter upon the study of the ancient languages with a very defective education," but it is not easy to see why he should thus sneer at our Academies, when he is trying to introduce the same absurdity into our Normal Schools. The remarks of the Secretary, however, are very just, but too general to form the basis of any action. It is of little use to rail at the introduction of higher studies, if these studies are not named, or to complain of superficial instruction in the elementary studies, unless a better method is not only described, but enjoined, and insisted upon in Normal Schools and Model Schools, and wherever the influence of the Board can be exerted.

The next fault commented upon is really the same as that just noticed. The Report says, "Among the faults observable in the mode of teaching in the Common Schools, that of attaching more importance to words than to things is conspicuous." Words, words, words seem to be the aim of Private as well as Common Schools, and we fear the teachers may with justice retort upon the Secretary, and ask him what else than words he has given them in such sentences as these: "Objects stand related to signs or symbols as substance to shadow. Language itself should, as far as possible, be studied from an inner point of view, beginning with the thought and thence proceeding to its expression, as from cause to effect; or, to speak more definitely, the words of the author should set the understanding and imagination of the pupils at work upon the objects or ideas represented, and these, when truly and vividly conceived, should give to the words employed their more precise import in the connection. In this way language will be learned, as it is in common speech, by usage. Teachers do not duly consider what a wide difference there is between the abstract view of the author, and the more concrete and lifelike view of the pupil, &c., &c." Now we will venture to say that not one teacher nor one parent in a thousand would take the idea

contained in these words, and if he dug for it, as few do, he would not know what to do with it when found, and yet it is only an amplification of the old maxim "Think before you speak."

Many remarks under this head are very judicious, and the concluding paragraph has such a bearing upon one of our notions, that we will copy it entire. "The truth is," says the Secretary, "the text book can not do the work of the teacher. It may aid him, but he will still have more to do with the subject than with the author. He will need to pay chief regard to the pupils' attainments and mental activity, and aim at evolving new ideas from those already possessed. In order to do this, the language employed must be conformed to the ideas entertained by the learner. (That is, the language of the teacher should be simple and calculated to explain that of the book.) At first, only a very general idea or outline, so to speak, of the subject in hand is apprehended, for the designation of which familiar and popular language is best adapted. *It is sometimes necessary to conform, for a little time, not only to children's habits of thought but to their vocabulary also;* as their ideas become more definite by the addition of minuter details to the outlines of the picture previously formed in the mind, there will be a demand for greater precision in terms, and so there is a natural progression in the accuracy and completeness of a pupil's ideas, requiring a corresponding progression in language. Books, which are always less specific in their adaptations than the words of the teacher, can not be exactly conformed to each one's individual wants. *Hence the necessity of an instructor who can learn the exact wants of his pupils, and bring his thoughts into close contact with theirs.*"

We are accused of riding the hobby of mutual or monitorial instruction, and, believing with the late Judge Woodbury, that "it is the only discovery in education that has been made for half a century," we plead guilty to a partiality founded on personal experience of many years. Now, if we wished to recommend this system, we know of no words in which we could better do it, than in those of the Secretary just quoted. It is true, as he says, that children do not understand text books; they must be explained; must be explained in words with which the child is familiar, and brought down to the level of the child's capacity. In every school there will be a few pupils brighter than the rest, to whom the teacher can communicate the idea, but the far greater number never take the idea, and, therefore, take the words instead. The plan of mutual instruction (we like this term better than monitorial) requires the few who take the idea to impart it to those who have failed to do so, believing that those who act as monitors are greatly benefited by the endeavors to explain; for their own ideas

are made more distinct, the impression on their minds is more deeply fixed, and the attempt to explain is an exercise in the use of language of more value to them than all the technical grammar in the world. This, and the belief that the mind and heart of a child are never improved by the infliction of corporeal pain, though obedience be obtained or the lesson learned ; that is, a belief in the advantages of mutual instruction and in the uselessness of corporal punishment are our great heresies, and they must go by this name until it is popular for the Secretary and the Board to acknowledge them in words, as we have no doubt they do in thought and practice.

After stating the Physiological fact that the powers of the mind are gradually or successively developed, the Report very properly denounces the common practice of exercising the understanding to the neglect of the physical powers, the senses, which in childhood are wide awake, and the imagination, which seems to lie half way between sense and abstraction. We wish the Secretary had said something on the necessity of furnishing our primary schools with proper apparatus for exercising the body and limbs, and for instructing the senses. We wish he had insisted upon the teacher's forming collections of natural objects, by the aid of which useful knowledge of common things may be imparted. Such collections aid the teacher as well as the pupil, and cultivate in the young mind a love of nature, which will, in time, expand into science, and keep out a thousand evils that are always ready to occupy a vacant mind. "My plan," said an eminent divine, "is to fill the mind with good seed, that there may be no room for any tares." We should like to give the whole of the Secretary's remarks on this head, but we have not room, and it is far better, for him and the public, that we should point out his errors, since there is a host ready to praise what no one disputes.

At the risk of again mounting our hobby, however, we will extract a few more words from this section, because, we think, the Secretary has not fully seen how admirably the mutual system provides for what is so necessary in all schools, the reviewing of studies, to keep knowledge alive. He says, "It is scarcely a less important principle in teaching, to make sure of what has once been learned, either by constantly reviewing it, or by frequently using it in the subsequent part of the course. The want of attention to this obvious truth renders the knowledge acquired in schools often exceedingly insecure, many things fading from the memory in order to make room for others. Nothing that is learned at this period should be allowed to be forgotten." Now nothing can be worse than the system of teaching and reviewing, learning and forgetting, that at present prevails. Nobody denies

that children forget about as fast as they learn, nay, quite as fast, if the lesson has only been committed to memory; nobody denies that frequent reviews are indispensable, and that a review is generally the same thing, with most children, as learning the lesson anew. In the ordinary way, a season is set apart for review, and the children study harder than they do to prepare for ordinary recitations. The preparation for examinations and exhibitions, which requires every thing else to be set aside, is little else than a review, and all parents who have promising children know what an anxious and exhausting season it generally is. On the plan of mutual instruction, this reviewing is a very simple and very pleasant affair. If the older pupils are constantly, or even occasionally required to teach what they have learned to others, who know less than they do, the lesson is reviewed most effectually, and all the benefits of teaching as well as learning are secured. It will not do to say that the instruction thus given by way of review will be inferior to that given by the teacher, for the teacher can hear the lesson himself, *afterwards*, if he pleases, and so make sure of it. But the fact is, the lower class will get *as many* distinct ideas from the monitor as from the teacher, and often *more*, if the monitor has been well taught, for the monitor can sometimes "bring his thoughts into closer contact with those of the younger children," than the teacher can do for the life of him. Let any parent try this with an older and a younger child.

We shall conclude this portion of our Review by another extract from the Report, which embraces an important truth, and suggests an essential improvement in the plan of instruction pursued in the Common Schools. It is our comfort that at least thirty years ago we acted upon the plan which is now proposed by the Secretary, and we hope his precept will be more influential than our example. "The power," says he, "of relieving the understanding or memory, when fatigued, by exercising the taste or imagination, as well as the organs of the body in vocal training, drawing and the like, has not yet received due attention. Such things are to the mind what oxygen is to the lungs; they renovate it, and speedily put it in a condition for renewed exertion. The mind can no more continue to work through one of its faculties, without rest or change, than the body can through one set of its muscles. Change at suitable intervals is the law of life to both. Those studies, therefore, which furnish mental recreation, can be introduced into schools, without any loss of time. As much can be accomplished in the several studies in connection with them as without them."

We were the first public or private teacher of New England, and probably of the United States, that introduced *vocal music* into a Common School, as a general exercise for all the pupils.

We were the first to introduce regular *gymnastic exercises* and to teach them to our pupils. We were the first to introduce *map drawing*, as a general exercise; the first to teach *drawing*, aye, and *printing*, to every child in school; the first in Boston to collect a *cabinet* of minerals, plants, bones and other objects to illustrate our lessons in Natural History; the first to own and use an air pump,* an electrical machine, a telescope, orrery, and other *apparatus* to illustrate our lessons in Natural Philosophy; the first in Boston to introduce the use of the *Blackboard* (we had a dozen); the first to abolish *corporal punishment* in every shape and form; the first to have *dancing* taught to every pupil, in the school room, and under our own eye; the first to give a free course of *Lectures* (as we did every Winter, to large audiences, for twenty years) at our own expense and almost without any assistance; and the first, some may say, to boast of only doing our duty. We did all this, and much more of the same description, and, therefore, we *know* that what the Secretary says of the advantages of such things is true, and the neglect of such things deplorable if not criminal. We shall continue our Review in the next number.

PER-CENTAGE.

We welcome the following communication from one of the ablest teachers in the land, and we hope he will not think us ungrateful if, like Oliver Twist, we ask for more. We are glad to find him using Warren Colburn's "First Lessons," which has had many imitators but no equals. ED.

MR. EDITOR,—A recent communication in your valuable Journal, signed "A. B. T." (C. S. J., January 15, 1852) reminds me of a matter I long since intended to communicate for insertion in the C. S. Journal, should you deem it worth the insertion.

That excellent work, "Colburn's First Lessons," seems to me to be deficient in not having sufficiently illustrated the term "*per cent.*" and its various applications. I have been, as you know, engaged some years in teaching, and have not met one pupil in one hundred, that had a *clear* idea of the term "*per cent.*," and it mattered little what might be the age of the pupil. Ask pupils what is meant by "*per cent.*," and many, perhaps most, of them, will answer "so many hundredths." The inference would be

* The first Air Pump made in the United States was cast and made from ours. We bought our Electrical Machine of the Associated Apothecaries of Boston, who imported it to lend to the physicians, but found no use for it. Most of our apparatus was made by ourself, or under our direction, by mechanics unused to such work, and yet this was only thirty years ago.

that they *understood their own answer*, such, however, is *seldom* the fact. Follow up this *first* question by a *second*, thus, "If I purchase 19 feet of plank, which is damaged 12 *per cent.*, how many feet of *good* plank shall I receive?" You will be more fortunate than I have *ever* been, I think, if you get any answer at all. The pupil, seeing no hundreds in the question, is lost, bewildered, because he has no correct idea of the term "*per cent.*" So a question like this, if answered at all, will, ninety-nine times in a hundred, be answered incorrectly: "If I purchase an apple for one cent and sell it for two cents, what '*per cent.*' do I *gain?*" — or this: "If I purchase an apple for three cents and sell it for two cents, what '*per cent.*' do I *lose?*" To obviate this deficiency in that *almost perfect* work, "First Lessons," I have been accustomed to furnish my pupils when they reach the "*Note*," on *page* 135 *of Colburn's First Lessons*, with the following *Manuscript Questions*, which they are required to study; and to be prepared to answer any *similar* questions that may be put to them. The *identical Manuscript Questions* are *not* given to them, nor are any *answers* appended to the *Manuscript Questions* when given to my *pupils*, though I have appended them in sending them to *you*, that your correspondent "A. B. T." may have the pleasure of trying *her* skill, before she tries that of *her pupils*. I have said, "The *identical* Manuscript Questions" are *not* given to the pupil, but *similar* ones. My reason for this course is obvious, the pupil must fully understand the *principle* of *each* of the *Manuscript Questions*, or he cannot answer any *similar* questions; and as the pupil knows, *beforehand*, that *similar* questions *only*, will be *asked*, he is careful to make himself master of the *principle*. I think I see you smile; I understand that smile; but you must recollect, every body has not attended as many Institutes as you have, and consequently does not know there are many teachers not competent to *make* similar questions for pupils.

To save much needless writing the questions are condensed in some respects, and, if necessary, the teacher should state to the pupil how the questions are to be understood; thus the first question should be given out: "If I buy a quantity of goods for a certain sum, and sell them so as to *gain* or *lose* 10 *per cent.*, what *part of the cost* do I *gain* or *lose?*" — and so on.

Questions.

1.—Buy for a certain sum, sell so as to *gain* or *lose* 10 *per cent.*, what *part of cost* do I *gain* or *lose?* $\frac{1}{10}$. 2.—*Gain* 11 *per cent.*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? 111 per cent. 3.—*Gain* $12\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent.*, what *part of cost* do I *sell* for? $\frac{9}{8}$. 4.—*Lose* $6\frac{1}{4}$ *per cent.*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? $93\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. 5.—*Lose*

$33\frac{1}{3}$ *per cent.*, what *part of cost* do I *sell* for? $\frac{2}{3}$. 6.—*Gain* or *lose* $\frac{3}{16}$ of *cost*, what *per cent.* do I *gain* or *lose?* $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. 7.—*Gain* $\frac{1}{3}$ of *cost*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? $133\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. 8.—Lose $\frac{3}{8}$ of *cost*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? $62\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. 9.—Sell for a certain sum, *gain* 10 *per cent.*, what *part of sum received* do I *gain?* $\frac{1}{11}$. 10.—*Gain* $12\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent.*, what *part of sum received* did I *buy* for? $\frac{8}{9}$. 11.—*Lose* $18\frac{3}{4}$ *per cent.*, what *part of sums received* do I *lose?* $\frac{3}{13}$. 12.—*Lose* $33\frac{1}{3}$ *per cent.*, what *part of sums received* did I buy for? $\frac{3}{2}$.

1.—Buy for 11 cents, sell so as to *gain* or *lose* 11 *per cent.*, what do I *gain* or *lose?* $1\frac{21}{100}$ cents. 2.—Buy for 12 cents, sell so as to *gain* $12\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent.*, what do I *sell* for? $13\frac{1}{2}$ cents. 3.—Buy for 16 cents, sell so as to *lose* $18\frac{3}{4}$ *per cent.*, what do I *sell* for? 13 cents. 4.—Buy for 11 cents, sell for 13 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *gain?* $18\frac{2}{11}$ per cent. 5.—Buy for 13 cents, sell for 50 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? $384\frac{8}{13}$ per cent. 6.—Buy for 13 cents, sell for 11 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *lose?* $15\frac{5}{13}$ per cent. 7.—Buy for 50 cents, sell for 13 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? 26 per cent. 8.—Sell for 11 cents and *gain* 11 *per cent.*, what do I *gain?* $1\frac{10}{111}$ cents. 9.—Sell for 12 cents, and *gain* $12\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent.*, what did I *buy* for? $10\frac{2}{3}$ cents. 10.—Sell for 16 cents and *lose* $18\frac{3}{4}$ *per cent.*, what did I *lose?* $3\frac{9}{13}$ cents. 11.—Sell for 15 cents and *lose* $33\frac{1}{3}$ *per cent.*, what did I *buy* for? $22\frac{1}{2}$ cents. 12.—Sell for 11 cents and *gain* 5 *cents*, what *per cent* do I *gain?* $83\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. 13.—Sell for 13 cents and *gain* 9 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? 325 per cent. 14.—Sell for 11 cents and *lose* 5 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *lose?* $31\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. 15.—Sell for 13 cents and *lose* 26 *cents*, what *per cent.* do I *sell* for? $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.

Your correspondent "A. B. T." may possibly doubt whether children are competent to answer the questions, so, to put her *doubts* fully at rest, I state, that I have never found one incompetent. The *youngest* child I *recollect* to have studied them was not nine years of age. When pupils have been *properly* taught and have reached thus far in "Colburn's First Lessons," they are found fully competent to answer every one of the *twenty-seven* questions readily. It may be proper to remark, however, that my pupils attend to *written* and *intellectual* Arithmetic, as soon as they can read; and that they are taught to read and write together, and I *believe*, Mr. Editor, in that respect your course and mine have been similar. As they attend to written as well as intellectual Arithmetic, as I before said, they have generally learned to change complex fractions into simple ones, (in their *written* Arithmetic) before they reach this part of "First Les-

sons," if they should not thus have learned, a very few minutes on the black-board will enable them to do it. I mention this circumstance, because, as the identical manuscript questions are never to be given, but only similar ones, it may very frequently happen that so simple a question as the 11th question in the first series may not be given to the pupil. To illustrate my meaning, all acquainted with *Spanish* coins will see at once that $18\frac{3}{4}$ *per cent.* equals three Spanish coins which we Bostonians call "fourpence-half-pennies," and that these three coins we know are $\frac{3}{16}$ of a dollar, or 100 cents; that, consequently, I *lose* $\frac{3}{16}$ of the *cost* of the goods, and received $(\frac{16}{16} - \frac{3}{16} =) \frac{13}{16}$ only of their cost; and then the $\frac{3}{16}$ of the *cost* (*lost*) are $\frac{3}{13}$ of the $\frac{13}{16}$ of the cost (*received*). But, suppose the 11th question of the first series had been put thus, which is similar, "If I sell a quantity of goods for a certain sum and lose $4\frac{2}{7}$ per cent., what part of the sum received do I *lose?*" If the pupil cannot change complex into simple fractions, he will probably find the question too difficult. Supposing him to *know* how to do this, he will probably solve the question intellectually, thus, $100 - 4\frac{2}{7} = 95\frac{5}{7}$, and $4\frac{2}{7}$ is $\frac{4\frac{2}{7}}{95\frac{5}{7}}$ of $95\frac{5}{7}$; and $\frac{4\frac{2}{7}}{95\frac{5}{7}} = \frac{30}{670} = \frac{3}{67}$ Answer.

If the pupil should *not* know how to change complex into simple fractions, take him to the black-board, give him the rule, illustrate it by every variety of example, give him the chalk *afterwards*, stand by him at the black-board till he too has solved one question of each kind. First the rule, "The numerator and denominator must both be fractions, or made such, then multiply the numerator of the numerator by the denominator of the denominator for the numerator of the simple fraction, and multiply the numerator of the denominator by the denominator of the numerator for the denominator of the simple fraction." Examples;—

$$\frac{\frac{3}{4}}{\frac{5}{7}} = \frac{21}{20} \quad \frac{\frac{5}{6}}{9} = \frac{\frac{5}{6}}{\frac{9}{1}} = \frac{5}{24} \quad \frac{3}{\frac{2}{7}} = \frac{\frac{3}{1}}{\frac{2}{7}} = \frac{21}{2} \quad \frac{2\frac{3}{4}}{4\frac{3}{11}} = \frac{\frac{11}{4}}{\frac{47}{11}} = \frac{121}{188}$$

and so on. When at the black-board, the teacher should take the rule to pieces and show the pupil that it is correct, and neither *allow* him, nor *force* him "to go it, blind," as the jockeys say. Let him do it something in this way,—What part of 2 cents is 1 cent? $\frac{1}{2}$. What part of 5 cents are 3 cents? $\frac{3}{5}$. What part of 6 oranges are 5 oranges? $\frac{5}{6}$. What part of 7 ninths are 3 ninths? $\frac{3}{7}$. You see then that one fraction $(\frac{3}{9})$ can be the part of another fraction $(\frac{7}{5})$ just as well as one *whole* thing can be the part of any number of *whole* things, but the things must be *alike*. You cannot tell what part of 7 apples 4 oranges are, because the

things are not alike; so you can not tell at once what part 5 *sevenths* ($\frac{5}{7}$) 3 *fifths* ($\frac{3}{5}$) are; but, if you can make them alike you can easily tell. Thus, what part of a dollar is a "ninepence"? Here the things are not alike and you cannot tell at once; you must first make them alike, and then you can tell. A dollar is 100 cents; a "ninepence" is $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents, $12\frac{1}{2}$ *cents* are $\frac{12\frac{1}{2}}{100}$ of 100 cents. Now, though the numerator and denominator are alike, inasmuch as they are cents, still you see we have a fraction in the numerator. Let us get rid of it. $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents $= \frac{25}{2}$ of a cent; and 100 cents $= \frac{200}{2}$ of a cent; 25 *halves* of a cent are $\frac{25}{200} = \frac{1}{8}$ of 200 *halves* of a cent; and we thus get rid of our complex fraction ($\frac{12\frac{1}{2}}{100}$) and get in its stead ($\frac{1}{8}$) a simple fraction. Now our rule does the same thing; observe: $\frac{\frac{4}{7}}{\frac{5}{11}} = \frac{\frac{44}{77}}{\frac{35}{77}} = \frac{44}{35}$. Here $\frac{4}{7}$ and $\frac{5}{11}$ are not alike, and we make them so by reducing both to 77ths, which is done by multiplying the two denominators together; and, in all cases, fractions may be thus made alike; but, as we have no use for this common denominator (77) our rule merely directs us to get the numerators, which you see always make the *result*. So in this example: —

$\frac{3\frac{4}{5}}{4\frac{2}{7}}$ $(= \frac{\frac{19}{5}}{\frac{30}{7}} = \frac{\frac{133}{35}}{\frac{150}{35}} =)$ $\frac{133}{150}$, the part within the parenthesis may be omitted as perfectly useless, thus: $3\frac{4}{5}$ you know are equal to $\frac{19}{5}$ this is the *numerator* of the complex fraction, and hence "the numerator of the numerator" is 19. This is all we wish to know, *at present*, of it; we multiply this by the "denominator of the denominator," (which is always the same as that of the fraction in the denominator of the complex fraction,) in this case 7, and we get for a product (19 ⋈ 7 =) 133, to make the *numerator* of the *simple* fraction, (or result,) you see the numerator *is* 133 ($\frac{133}{150}$). So with respect to the denominator of the complex fraction ($4\frac{2}{7}$), which you know is equal to $\frac{30}{7}$, and consequently "the numerator of the denominator" of the complex fraction is 30, this is all we wish to know about it at present; this is to be multiplied by "the denominator of the numerator" (which is always the same as that of the fraction in the numerator of the complex fraction,) in this case 5, we get for a product (30 ⋈ 5 =) 150, to make the *denominator* of the *simple* fraction (or result). You see the denominator *is* 150 ($\frac{133}{150}$), hence you see that a little practice will soon enable you to make the numerator and denominator of the complex fractions (as the rule requires) *fractions;* you also see that, though these fractions must be made alike, there is no necessity of expressing their common denominator, as it forms no part of the *simple* fraction (or result).

Now turn your back to the black-board, and let me *hear* you solve a question or two. $\frac{\frac{5}{6}}{\frac{7}{9}}$ = what? *Answer*, 5 times 9 are 45; 6 times 7 are 42; $\frac{45}{42} = \frac{15}{17}$. Very well. $\frac{5\frac{1}{3}}{6\frac{3}{7}}$ = what? *Answer*, 3 times 5 are 15 and 1 makes 16, and 7 times 16 are 112; 7 times 6 are 42 and 3 make 45, and 3 times 45 are 135, $\frac{112}{135}$. Very well, I think you understand it. Now answer me at once; all I wish is simply the *answer*. $\frac{\frac{2}{7}}{\frac{5}{9}}$ = what? *Answer*, $\frac{18}{35}$. Right. $\frac{4}{\frac{3}{7}}$ = what? $\frac{28}{3}$. Right. $\frac{25\frac{1}{6}}{8}$ = what? $\frac{17}{48}$. Right. $\frac{9}{5\frac{2}{7}}$ = what? $\frac{63}{37}$. Right. $\frac{35\frac{5}{8}}{24\frac{1}{7}}$ = what? $\frac{203}{144}$. Right. I believe you now understand it, and you may take your seat.

I have endeavored, Mr. Editor, to be brief; but, perhaps I may have been obscure, and thus have failed both in brevity and clearness. If so, just publish as much or as little of this communication as you please, or none at all, if you think proper, as I do not sigh to see myself *in print*, even *anonymously*. If you should publish any part of this hasty article, let me add one word to your correspondent "A. B. T." If she has time to spare to solve the *usual* puzzling arithmetical questions that are inserted in many arithmetics, merely to cause them to be sold, an "old head" would inform her, that she will probably find her time more profitably employed in learning something more connected with the *practical concerns of life*. Many of the puzzling questions inserted in Arithmetics, have nothing to do with Arithmetic, as such, and they cause a deplorable loss of time.*

With best wishes for the success of your Journal, and that you may be properly and ably supported in your independent course, I am, Mr. Editor,

Yours, &c., NEMO.

He who pretends to know every thing is a fool; he who presumes to know nothing is on the way to wisdom. The satisfied never progress.

* We believe that one-half of the time that has been spent by the teachers of New England in discussing the question "What is the product of 25 cents multiplied by 25 cents?" if spent in making shirts at five cents apiece, would have done the teachers more good, and would have saved many from the disgraceful confession that they can not afford to take an Educational Journal. ED.

SONG FOR THINKERS.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

Take the spade of perseverance,
  Dig the field of progress wide;
Every rotten root of faction
  Hurry up and cast aside:
Every stubborn weed of Error;
  Every seed that hurts the soil;
Tares, whose every growth is error,—
  Dig them out, whate'er the toil!

Give the stream of education
  Broader channel, bolder force;
Hurl the stones of persecution
  Out, where'er they block its course:
Seek for strength in self-exertion;
  Work, and still have faith to wait;
Close the crooked gate to fortune;
  Make the road to honor straight!

Men are agents for the future!
  As they work, so ages win
Either harvest of advancement,
  Or the product of their sin!
Follow out true cultivation,
  Widen education's plan;
From the majesty of nature
  Teach the majesty of man!

Take the spade of perseverance,
  Dig the field of progress wide;
Every bar to true instruction
  Carry out and cast aside:
Feed the plant whose fruit is wisdom;
  Cleanse from crime the common sod;
So that from the throne of Heaven
  It may bear the glance of God.

CHARADE.

My *first* is what this Journal needs,
  My *second*, what it aims to be;
My *whole* is what it ne'er will prove,
  Till Honesty's good policy.

PLAYING FISH.

The other day, as I was going to the Post Office in my village, I saw a rosy little fellow, not more than six years old, standing at least ankle deep in a puddle caused by the melting snow. He had a long switch in his hand, to the end of which a string was attached with a stone, and this he kept busily moving in the water. Supposing he had lost something and was trying to recover it, I asked him what he had lost. "Nothing," said he, with a smile and a leer, "*I'm only playing fish.*"

I passed on, but the answer of the boy did not pass out of my mind. "Playing fish," thought I, what a comment upon education is contained in this reply! The little fellow has left the comforts of home, the dry land, and the company of his fellows, to play fish, to find pleasure in imitating what at best is a cruel exercise of power and skill. How much better would it be for him and for the world, if, instead of playing fish, he could be taught to play kindness to animals, and benevolence to man.

When I reached the Post Office, I learned that there was to be a great gathering of troops in a neighboring field, and that a sham-fight was to take place in honor of a distinguished patriot, whose birth day was to be celebrated. I could already hear the drums, and many boys and men, expecting great pleasure from the show, were constantly arriving. Among the rest, as eager as any one to enjoy the sham-fight, whom should I see, forcing his way through his elders, at the risk of being trampled under their feet, whom should I see, but my little fisherman. Ah, thought I, here is another lesson in the same school, his elders are "playing fish," and are training themselves to become "fishers of men!"

"How are you, again, my little fisherman?" said I. "Did you catch any thing in the puddle?" "No, sir, not exactly," said he, "but I mean to fish in the brook next Summer." "You have come to see the soldiers," said I. "Yes, sir," said he, "they are going to have a splendid sham-fight presently." "What is a sham-fight?" said I, merely to hear his answer. "O," said he, swelling at the idea of his superior knowledge, "why don't you know what a sham-fight is? I never *seed* one, but they tell me the soldiers have sides, and make believe kill each other." "Well, my boy," said I, "don't you think this is like playing fish in the puddle?" "Not exactly," said he, closing his right eye and throwing his head on his left shoulder, for they never catch fish in puddles, and the sham-fighters do sometimes kill one another."

"What will you take to go home now, and not stay to see the fight?" said I. "O, I don't know," said he, "that would be too bad." "Have you a little kitten?" said I. "No, sir," said he, "I had one once, but my brother *sot* a dog on it, and he killed it." "Have you any chickens?" "No, I had a little one once, and my brother killed it by trying how near he could throw a stone without hitting it. But he did hit it, though, and it died." "Well, my little fellow, if you will go home with me now, I will give you a little kitten and two little chickens?" "For my own!" exclaimed the little fisherman. "Yes, for your own." "I'll go right away," said he, "and if my brother touches these as he did the others, I'll pay him for it." "I will give him some too, said I, and then he will help take care of yours. Come, get into my wagon, and let us be gone!" On the way, I conversed with the child, and found that his disposition was naturally kind and benevolent, and my hope is, that, by giving him some little animals on which he may exercise his affections, I may create in him a tender feeling towards the lower creation, and thus lay the foundation for a character that will prefer to "play benefit others," rather than to "play fish" in the puddle or on the battle-field.

PARLEY'S FIRST BOOK OF HISTORY.

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It seems to be a work of supererogation to recommend a work by Peter Parley, but we can not forbear to add our testimony to that already borne, because we believe the author of this book has made a really useful book, and one which, if taught with only tolerable fidelity, must make an indelible impression upon the youthful mind.

There can be no doubt that the best way to teach Geography is by connecting it with History, so that when any place is shown to the child, its location may be fixed in his mind by the incidents that have made it worthy of being mentioned. The child who should pass a remarkable man without knowing that he was so, or why he was distinguished, would hardly observe him, and could not be expected to notice his form or features so as to recognize

him again, or describe him to others; but, point him out to the child, and tell him for what he has been distinguished, and he becomes an object of interest, and his features will never be forgotten.

What is true of persons is as true of places and such other matters as belong to the department of Geography, and the History before us has been so judicious in the selection of places and events, and so happy in the description of the latter, that both place and event must by the law of association be easily learned, and permanently retained.

The edition just issued is a great improvement upon previous editions, and seems to leave nothing to be desired in this department of elementary instruction. We shall hope no longer to see in our schools places pointed out to which no ideas are attached, and events related which have no local habitation.

BUSINESS TECHNICALS.

[For the Journal.]

The language of Price-Currents, in commercial newspapers, is often amusing, and it is not uncommon to see announcements somewhat like the following.

Railroad Stocks, though *languid*, are beginning *to look up*.
Feathers are *heavy*, but Lead is growing *light*.
Spirits are *low*, in prospect of the Maine law, but Cordials are *rising*.
Oranges are *flat*, but Figs are becoming more *firm*.
Dry Goods are *a drug*, and Domestics are *slack*.
Lumber is *short*, and holders are more *stiff*.
Flour is *dead*, but Hops are *quick*.
Nails are *dull*, and all Provisions *dished* for the present.
Cattle, neat, are *brisk*, and Swine *easy*.
Coal is *fair*, and Wood has *a better feeling* since the cold set in.
Wool is *lively*, and Cotton *beginning to move*.
Molasses *sticks* in first hands; Candles are *tending upwards*.
Fish are *steady*, and Hemp *in less demand*.
Hides, salted, are *smarter*, but Indigo holders look *blue*.
Hops are *less active*, and Crash is *more quiet*.
Soap, common, *rubs hard*; Ashes abundant and *fine*.
Teas, black, hold their *grounds*, but Greens are quite *flat*.
Hay is *down*, and Hoops are getting *tight*.
Lime is unusually *slack*, and Spice *in season*.
Specie is *below par*, but Brass still commands *a premium*.

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A Friend to Education has authorized us to send, at his expense, 500 copies of this Journal to School Committees who will pay the postage on it. We have selected all those of Massachusetts, and about 200 of Maine. The postage is about *ten cents a year*. It is to be hoped that Committees will read it, lend it to their Teachers, and then put it in the District Library.

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We ask prompt payment of your subscriptions, because we need the money, to pay the Printer, the Paper Maker, and the Publisher. The present Editor has never yet received the first cent for his services, although the greater part of every number consists of original matter.

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Subscribers who do not give express notice to the contrary, are considered as continuing. If the paper continues to come, one of two things is certain,—either the notice has not reached the Publisher, or the subscriber owes some arrearages, and by law is responsible for all papers sent, until the whole arrearage is paid. It is very common for subscribers to suppose that they have given notice to the Publisher, because they have spoken to the Postmaster, or refused to take the paper out of the office. Because a subscription is payable *in advance*, he who pays for one year has no right to expect that the paper will not be sent a second year, because he does not send his dollar. We do our duty, whether he does his or not.

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